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ABSTRACT

This document presents one in a series of twenty-three case studies derived from in-depth interviews using a sampling of former participants in the Mountain- Plains program, a residential, family-based education program developed to improve the economic potential and lifestyle of selected student families in a six-state area. Each case study contains the following information about a specific student family: biographical data; participation in the educational and community programs; home, income, placement, and employment data; stated problems and/or satisfactions; summaries of the participants' personal and social development; individual ratings of the program; scripts of personal interviews; interviewer comments; and individual test scores and self-assessments. This document presents specific findings on Betty Beuler, a divorcee with four children. The follow-up study reports that Betty successfully completed the program and is currently employed as a key-punch operator. (Names in these studies have been changed.) Two other documents are included in the series: a report which examines work and income variables for the group (ED 110 610) and a report which summarized group findings on personal and social development (CE 014 681). Specific documentation for the instruments utilized in the study are included in both of these related documents. (BM)

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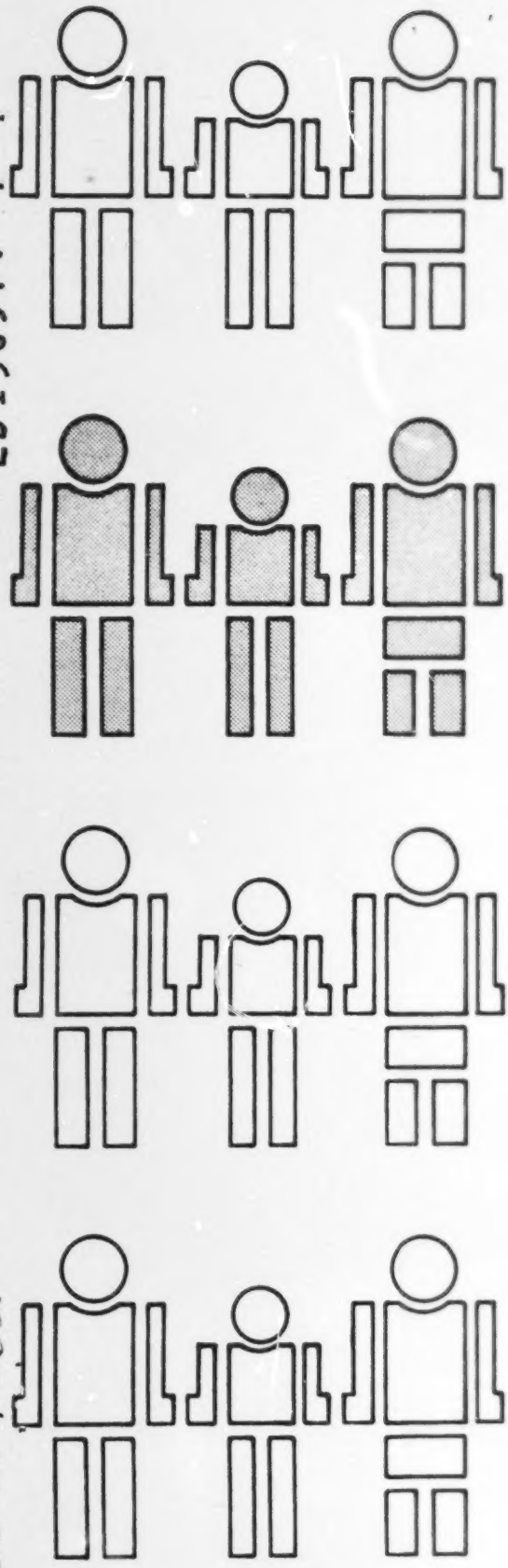

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CASE STUDY REPORT # 6

Betty Beuler

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MOUNTAIN PLAINS EDUCATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM INC.

CASE STUDY REPORT

BETTY BEULER

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May, 1975

A Product of Research Services Division
David A. Coyle, Director

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PREFACE

Reports in this series are derived from in depth interviews using a stratified random sample of former Mountain-Plains students. Interviews were conducted from November, 1974 through January, 1975 by Mountain-Plains professional research staff. Case Study Report 1 examines Work and Income variables for the group. Case Study Reports 2 through 24 include specific findings on each family included in the sampling. Case Study Report 25 summarizes group findings on personal and social development. A summary of the research design for the Case Study Reports is documented in: Coyle, David A.; Conrad, Rowan W.; and Myers, Douglas D. In Depth Case Study of Exited Families: A Summary of the Research Design for Phase 1 Preliminary Effects Study. Glasgow, Montana: Mountain-Plains Press, 1974. Specific documentation for the instruments utilized in the study are included in either Case Study Report 1 or Case Study Report 25. All names in these studies have been changed.

Michael C. Fenenbock
Series Editor

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CASE STUDY REPORT

BETTY BEULER

BACKGROUND

Betty Beuler entered the Mountain-Plains program as a single head of household in March 1973. A native of Austria, Betty speaks English with a German accent. She met and married her husband while he was serving with the United States Army in Germany. A rodeo performer, Beuler was frequently absent from the home. After ten years and four children, his absence became permanent and a divorce was pursued.

Prior to entering the program Betty and her four children were renting a five room house in Sidney, Montana. Betty worked as a teachers-aide/library assistant until terminated when the program lost its funds. At Mountain-Plains entry she had been unemployed for five months and had accumulated large debts--$740 of which was to be repaid during the succeeding 12 months.

PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

During her stay in the program Betty experienced several different problems. The children were involved in altercations with a staff member's children--due basically to problems in the staff member's family. However, when Betty approached the staff member, he threatened to get her kicked out of the program, should she make her complaints known to those in positions of authority. Betty tolerated the situation as long as possible, and finally took the situation to her counselor. As Betty's complaints were congruent with several others concerning the ethical conduct of the staff member, the staff member was ultimately dismissed (allowed to resign.)

Betty also experienced several medical problems and was a frequent visitor at the base health center. She was involved in three minor automobile accidents which did not involve major injury. Reportedly, these were caused by Betty blacking out and she feared she was an epileptic--medical examination did not confirm this fact. Although Betty frequently attended Counseling, her counselor reports she consistently talked around her problems and seemed unable to address them directly. In her occupational preparation area, Betty was reported to be an ideal student, industrious, hard working, and uncomplaining.

HOME AND INCOME

Betty exited Mountain-Plains in May of 1974. Although she had been offered a position at Glasgow Air Force Base, she felt the base was not a proper environment for her children and consequently accepted a position with a large data processing firm in Billings, Montana where she began work as a key-punch operator earning $2.33 per hour. Currently, Betty and her children, John, 14, Albert, 12, Mark, 9, and Linda, 5, live in a three bedroom apartment. The new modern apartment building is in a complex built for low income families. Betty pays $79 per month rent and is not certain of the amount subsidy--probably on the order of $70. Betty supplements her income by paying $90 per month for a maximum allocation of food stamps. Her income was increased when four months after hire she received a five cent per hour raise. Except for about $1300 in medical bills, most of which will probably be paid by Medicaid, Betty's financial position is tight but sound. The only other debt she has is $75 in payments remaining on the stereo she bought for the family.

EMPLOYMENT

On the MSS (See Figure 2) Betty's supervisor rated her at the 50th percentile on performance, 90th on conformance, 99th on dependability, and 50th on personal adjustment, with a 68th percentile ranking on general satisfactoriness. Overall, her supervisor rated Betty in the top fourth of workers. The supervisor declared that Betty's attendance was excellent, her attitude good, and that she was concientious and never grumbled. She said Betty was pleasant and got along well with both fellow workers and supervisors. She reported that as a key-punch operator, Betty does 9,000 strokes per hour with .25% error rate and that this was "very good indeed." Her supervisor stated that Betty was a "terrific employee and a terrific person." When asked about criticism, her supervisor reported that Betty would occasionally say she understands when she does not, and that she lacks self confidence--the supervisor is certain this will come in time. She says Betty "puts herself down because she is a perfectionist." But, it would be an ideal office if she had, "twenty more just like Betty."

Betty scores at norm on job motivation and below norm on work alienation. (See Figure 3). Thus Betty seems to be adequately motivated in, and not alienated from, her work. Betty is undecided about satisfaction with her current salary. She would like to have more but is not sure she is worth it. She feels good about her co-workers, fringe benefits, the skills she is using, and her overall working environment, and very good about the company and the supervisors. She sees her job as hectic at times and definitely not boring. Betty claims the job gives her a sense of accomplishment and that the people are easy to get along with. She particularly likes the fact that people there help-

ed her along without making her "feel stupid" and says this gave her a feeling of belonging.

Betty appreciates the fact that on her job she is exposed to various experiences (different kinds of jobs to do) and enjoys occasions when she is allowed to work with a different machine. She reports her job is challenging and says she likes that. When asked to comment negatively on the job, Betty replied the salary was "just too small" for five people to live on and that raises were not tied to production, but rather to longevity. She also felt that her supervisor did not have enough authority--particularly in such areas as raises and promotions--that this authority rests in another office where no one knows any of the employees. As a consequence, Betty reported often feeling like a number rather than a person to those above her supervisor. Sometime, she said, she would like to work in a smaller place were rewards could be tied to production. Betty said the only other problem she had on the job was her recent illness--bleeding ulcer--where hospitalization caused her to miss two weeks of work. Initially, Betty reports, she was worried about losing her job, however, both her supervisor and her co-workers assured her this would not happen.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Betty does use community services. She lives in low-income housing and has applied for Medicaid to cover the recent hospitalization. She contacted legal services trying to obtain child support payments (to no avail). Her two oldest

boys have "Big Brothers" through the local Big Brother program, Betty uses food stamps to supplement her income, and her youngest child is participating in the Head Start program.

Betty scores at the norm on both the Powerlessness and the Anomie scales; indicating adequate integration in her social field. These scores are given validity by the extent to which Betty is able to take advantage of Community and social services. (See Figure 3).

Although grateful for the assistance she has received through various social programs, Betty complains bitterly about the way in which these programs are administered. For example, she reported that when she was in the hospital and missed two weeks of work, she was ineligible for welfare benefits, since she was employed although hospitalized and not working. Betty feels that the welfare system should be administered to help people like herself who are trying to help themselves. She pointed out the example of a mutual acquaintance who did not even try to find work but rather "drew welfare all the time." Betty was upset about the fact that she gets no child support, and since she does not make a great deal of money and has several children, she is unable to accumulate savings to cover emergencies. Likewise she cannot afford a payroll deduction for Blue Cross. She reported that if friends at work had not assisted her with "taking care of the children and such" during her recent emergency, "I don't know what I would've done."

Betty says with working full time and raising four children, she has little time for community activities. Betty reports that the low rental apartment

area where she lives is a rough neighborhood and other former Mountain-Plains students living in Billings have confirmed this.

Betty believes she is making a major contribution to the community by keeping her children out of trouble and herself off of welfare. She has no leisure activities or hobbies because she says, "there just isn't time." At Mountain-Plains, Betty says, she went to community meetings a couple of times but found it was not relevant to her needs and did not become involved.

RATING THE MOUNTAIN-PLAINS PROGRAM

Betty rates Mountain-Plains as a positive influence in her life. She reports that all aspects of the program were of at least some value to her with the exception of Counseling and Home Management.[1] Betty says that of all the aspects of the Mountain-Plains program, English and Work Experience were of most value to her. She observed she had always had trouble with English, although she had tried to learn in various ways before. She stated that the Mountain-Plains Communication Skills program (English) was very good. She liked Work Experience because she said it increased her confidence. (See Figure 5).

Betty felt that Counseling and Recreation were the least useful parts of the program. Betty said she never used the Family Center and did not enjoy

[1] Betty's rating of Counseling is in agreement with the couselor's rating of benefits derived. Betty's counselor reported that because of her negative experience with a staff member who claimed to be a counselor--but was not--Betty was reticent and unable to open up in Counseling. However it was through her Counselor that she resolved the pseudo counselor problem.

"going over there" because of "some of the people that frequented it." Betty believed she did not receive any benefit from Counseling and says, she did not agree with her counselor on many points. When asked how the Family Center might be improved, Betty said that it should be better organized, "the kids should not have been allowed to run around free. That place was not just a baby sitting service and it should have had more supervision." Betty remarked that the Family Center was run by "student bullies." Regards Counseling, Betty felt she wanted and needed more counselor explanation as to why she was in Counseling and what was supposed to be accomplished. "I always felt lost."

Betty says that knowing what she knows now about Mountain-Plains, all the problems she would have, the car wrecks, her children being bullied by the staff member, etc., she would still attend Mountain-Plains. When asked to make general comments about Mountain-Plains, Betty said, "Make it clear to people who come there that Mountain-Plains does not owe them anything! Mountain-Plains caters to people too much. You should be more strict with people and not allow the goof-offs to disturb people who are trying to get something done." She feels that Mountain-Plains should set clear boundaries and prevent students from abusing the program and the community.

While at Mountain-Plains Betty validated Key-punch, and completed her GED (High School equivalency test) certificate. She reports the job skills she learned at Mountain-Plains were adequate, that she got what she expected and that she could do the job when she exited. This is confirmed by her

supervisor's report. Betty's suggestions for improvements in her preparation area (Business and Office) include: (1) Revising the "methods" of one particular instructor (this instructor departed Mountain-Plains prior to the interview). Because "he was very bad," Betty recalls, while another was very good, all the students went to one instructor, that this caused an overload, and that her preparation area needed additional staff. (2) More time was needed on machines and less on books. "The curriculum only made sense when students have their hands on the equipment." Betty reports the equipment used was out of date and that Business and Office needed an up-to-date key-punch. Betty also felt she was rushed through too fast and needed more machine time. She indicates this could have been arranged by allowing her to practice her skills by either decreasing the amount of bookwork and/or increasing the amount of time on the machine.

Although Betty is satisfied with her key-punch training, she felt that staff people judged her on an incorrect basis. Initially Betty wanted to take Secretarial as well, but was told in Business and Office she could not take shorthand because she could not spell English.[2] Betty declared, "I sometimes have trouble pronouncing English, but I can spell English words better than most Americans!"

Betty reacted very favorably both to Math and English and felt that both were

[2]She changed to key-punch, she says, "because my friend was going into it so I just went too." It should be noted that the entire Career Guidance Program has been revised since Betty made her "scientific" choice.

entirely adequate to what she needed. Betty says she would not change occupational choices now because she is very comfortable with what she has as she has mastered it, key-punchers are always needed, it makes her feel useful, and she can always get a job. Betty appeared pleased with her vocational identity.

Betty believed that Career Guidance helped her with both self confidence and self knowledge. The self confidence assistance, Betty related, was largely through the Work Experience program, while her self knowledge development came about through the exploration, awareness, and choice part of the program. Betty made no suggestions for improving Career Guidance. Regards, Counseling, Betty suggests spending more time in explaination and making it voluntary.[3]

Betty reported that her family had been healthy since leaving Mountain-Plains. Although they have had more doctor visits and illness since leaving, She feels more confident in dealing with health problems now. Betty says she is able to make ends meet dollar-wise, but just barely and this situation has not changed except now the money is derived from income while before it came from welfare payments. (Again and again Betty revealed an intense dislike for being on welfare.)

Betty says her children behave fairly well and she has little trouble in that

[3] Betty's complaints about Counseling typify those of students experiencing Counseling during that period, and have resulted in program changes that include more explanation and increased student negotiation of Counseling involvement.

area. Betty says there has been no change in this regard. The family is close and Betty understands the children, but says she always has and that Mountain-Plains did not affect this. She also reported confidence in dress and grooming but says she always has been confident in this area.

SATISFACTIONS

Betty reports she is well satisfied with her current situation in life and believes she copes well with everyday problems. For example, during her recent hospitalization, she managed to insure that her job would be available when she got back, to get her children cared for, to find people who could help out, and to make money stretch. She feels she is more self reliant now than before and has a feeling of, "I can do it myself." Betty declared, "I know I am not a nobody, I am a somebody." Another example of problem coping, Betty related, was getting Linda into Head Start after an initial refusal.

Betty feels that she has had both good and bad breaks in life. She feels her worst break was her divorce and that nobody, including the legal system, seems to be able to make her husband help with child support. Betty says her most prominent good break was Mountain-Plains. "They gave me an education and some money for it besides."

Betty reports her main sources of satisfaction to be her job and her family. She is least satisfied with life in the low rent neighborhood where her children sometimes have to fight to exist. She says she would like to move but that rent in other neighborhoods is very high and on her current salary she

is "stuck." Betty fears driving since her accidents, but says she needs a car. Betty is optimistic about the future, feels she can shape it the way she wants by meeting new people, and says she has already done so by making new friends in her job. She feels she will get ahead by working hard and pleasing both her supervisor and herself. Betty says this will allow her to ultimately get a better job and perhaps "some other things" (such as a move out of the low rent neighborhood.)

SELF CONCEPT

No pretest score is available on Betty's self concept, but current self concept scores are extremely favorable. Betty's self criticism score is high, indicating that she has a healthy capacity for self criticism and/or a tendency to be overly harsh on herself. Her total self concept is a standard deviation above the norm. All other scales are at or above the norm, and Betty scores particularly high on self satisfaction (acceptance of self with weakness), and on personal self concept. (See Figure 4).

FEMALE INTERVIEW

Betty says she is happy with herself physically, with the way she looks, and the way she feels. Her hospitalizaion uncovered a bad (bleeding) ulcer, "it gives a stabbing pain sometimes," otherwise Betty says she feels well. She is confident in her ability to do all her home care tasks, but due to illness and work, says she has fallen behind in housekeeping. (By observation her house cleaning was quite adequate.) She feels time pressures and says she does not have time for herself after she meets the needs of her family.

However, she says the children, particularly the oldest, are a great help. She does not belong to organizations or groups outside the home because, "There's just no time, and, "Mensch! When I get everything done I'm too tired to do something anyway."

Betty is not altogether satisfied with her life, although she feels her children appreciate her. She is dissatisfied, to a large extent, with being left alone to raise the children with no financial assistance from her former husband. Betty says she does little just for herself, that she does everything for her family. On the occasion when she does do something for herself, she feels guilty.

Betty reports reaching out more and taking more initiative than prior to Mountain-Plains. (The extent to which she is able to make use of community resources indicates this to be true.) Betty says that she is happy and confident in her role as a woman and that she would not rather be a man. Betty likes herself, and would enjoy herself as a friend because she views herself as, "a decent sort of a person," physically attractive, and honest. "I do not stab people in the back!" Betty says she does not seek out male relationships--fo several reasons, but mainly because she intends to prove she can do it by herself (that she can take care of the family without any help). Additionally, Betty is afraid of being hurt again and so avoids relationships. " I don't want to get involved." Finally Betty says she does not want to impose on anyone else and she believes that a male relationship, involving assistance with her children, would be imposing. "I don't want anybody giving me sympathy."

INTERVIEWER COMMENTS

Betty appreciated Mountain-Plains, felt she derived great benefits from it, and was particularly satisfied with her job training and her job training area. Nevertheless, Betty felt more instructional staff, more hands-on time, and additional modern equipment was needed.

Betty does not believe she benefited from the Recreation program or from Counseling. She felt that more supervision was needed at the Family Center and that the counselors needed to more fully explain Counseling. She also believed that Counseling should be voluntary.

Betty was very highly rated by her supervisor. She makes good use of community resources to supplement her meager income. She is no better off financially than she was before Mountain-Plains (except for reduced debts), but is much happier with herself as she is not drawing welfare. Her major goal is earning enough money to move out of low income housing and into another neighborhood--preferably by renting or buying a house.

It seems Career Guidance failed Betty in that even the interviewer knows you cannot support four children on a key-punch operator salary--and Betty reported being totally open to carreer choice at Mountain-Plains!

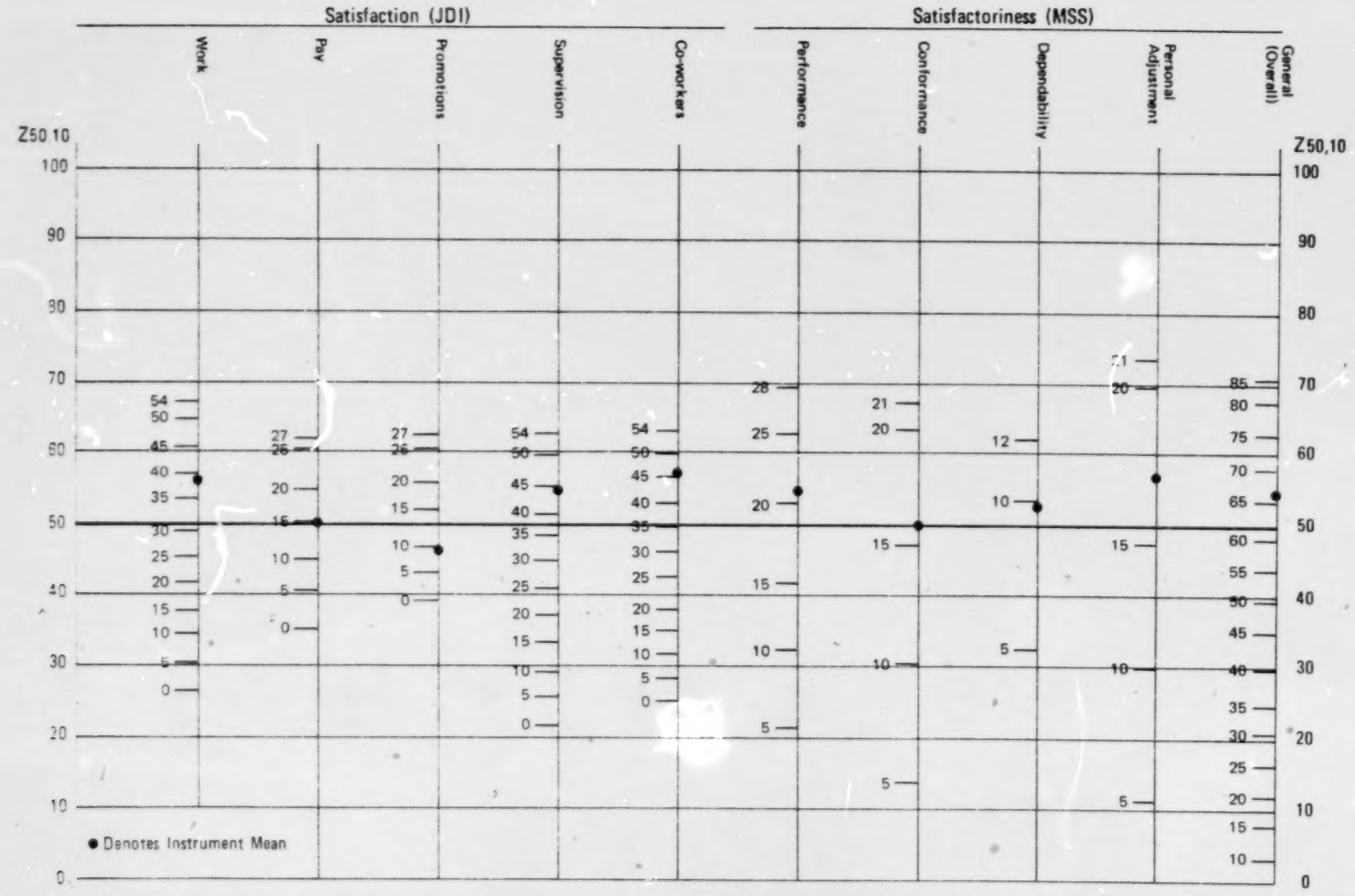
Betty appeared to exhibit some tension, but much less than at the time she entered Mountain-Plains. Her children are helpful and obedient, John, in particular, is doing very well in school--an "A" student. There is a good parent/child relationship, however, it was observed that the amount of energy needed to meet the demands of four active children were major contributions

to Betty's tension and, at the time of the interview, fatigue.

Betty is a success, although it seems that Mountain-Plains was unable to help Betty with one major problem--her nervous tension. The local clinic was also somehow unable to diagnose Betty's physical condition (ulcer), although her doctors tell her she has probably had it for years.

Figure 1

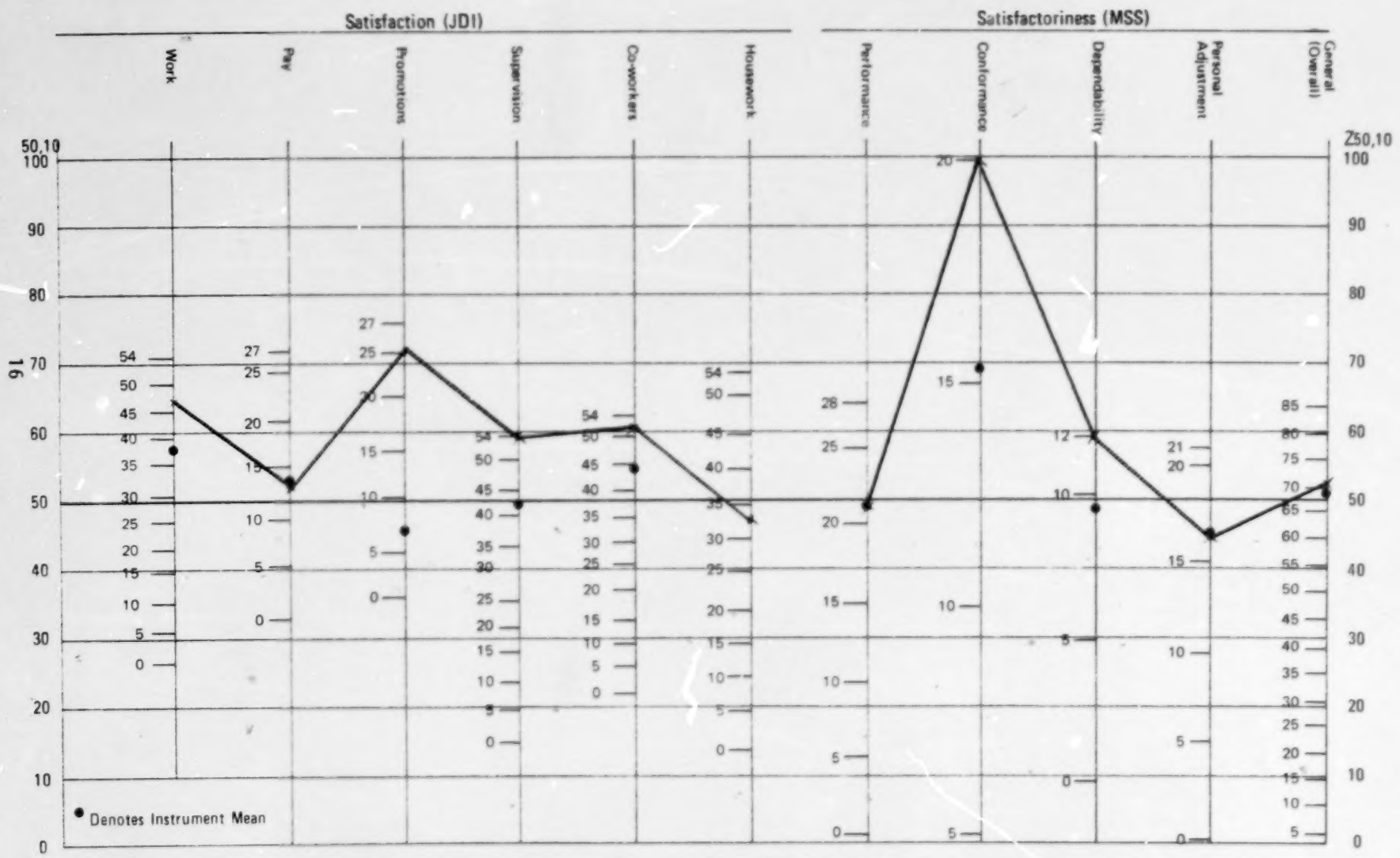
SATISFACTION AND SATISFACTORINESS – MALE
Single Female Head of Household. This Figgure Not Applicable



Note: Profile based on entering student scores.

Figure 2

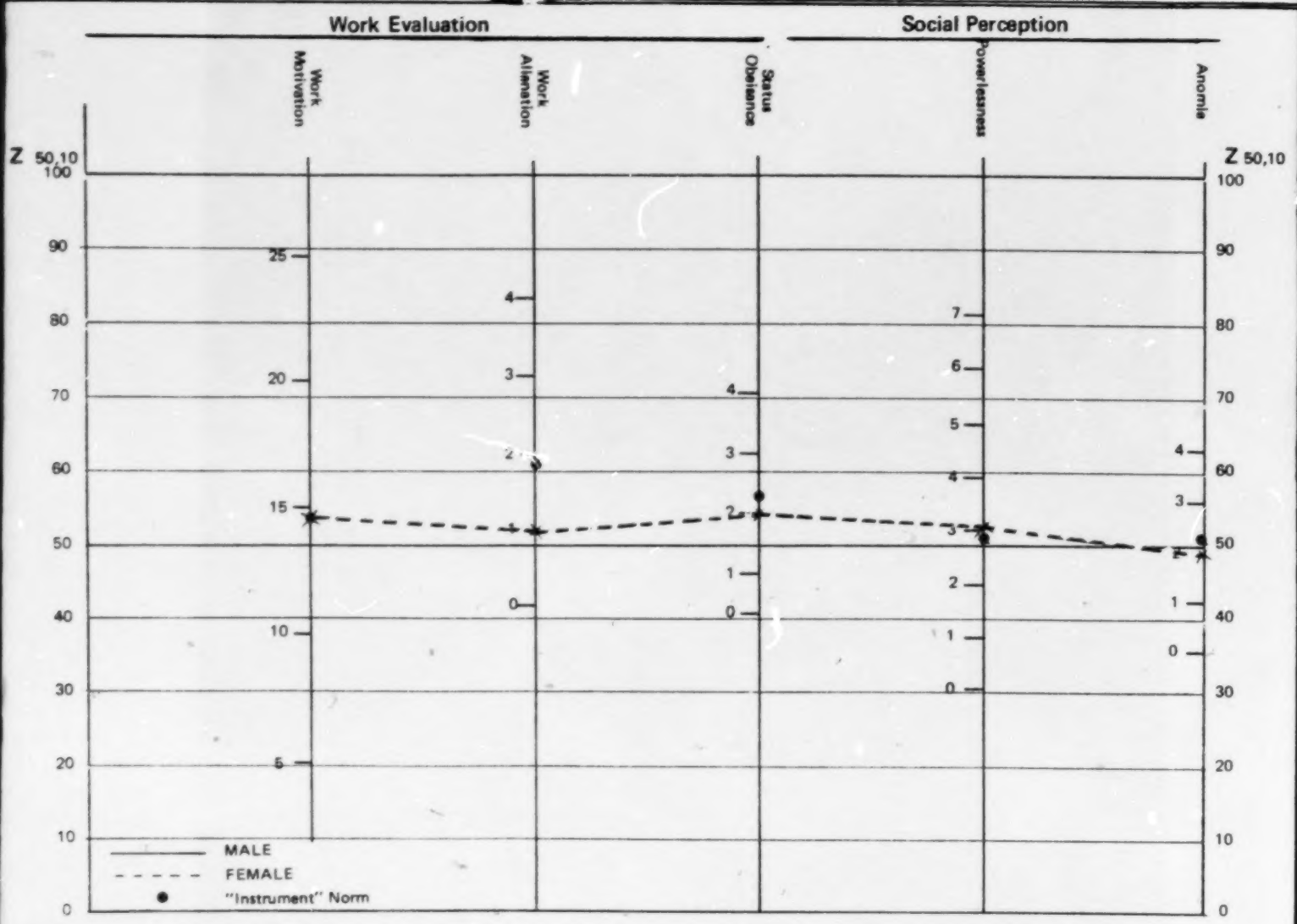
SATISFACTION AND SATISFACTORINESS – FEMALE



Note: Profile based on entering student norms except "Housework" which is based on instrument norm for employment.

Figure 3

MOTIVATION AND ALIENATION



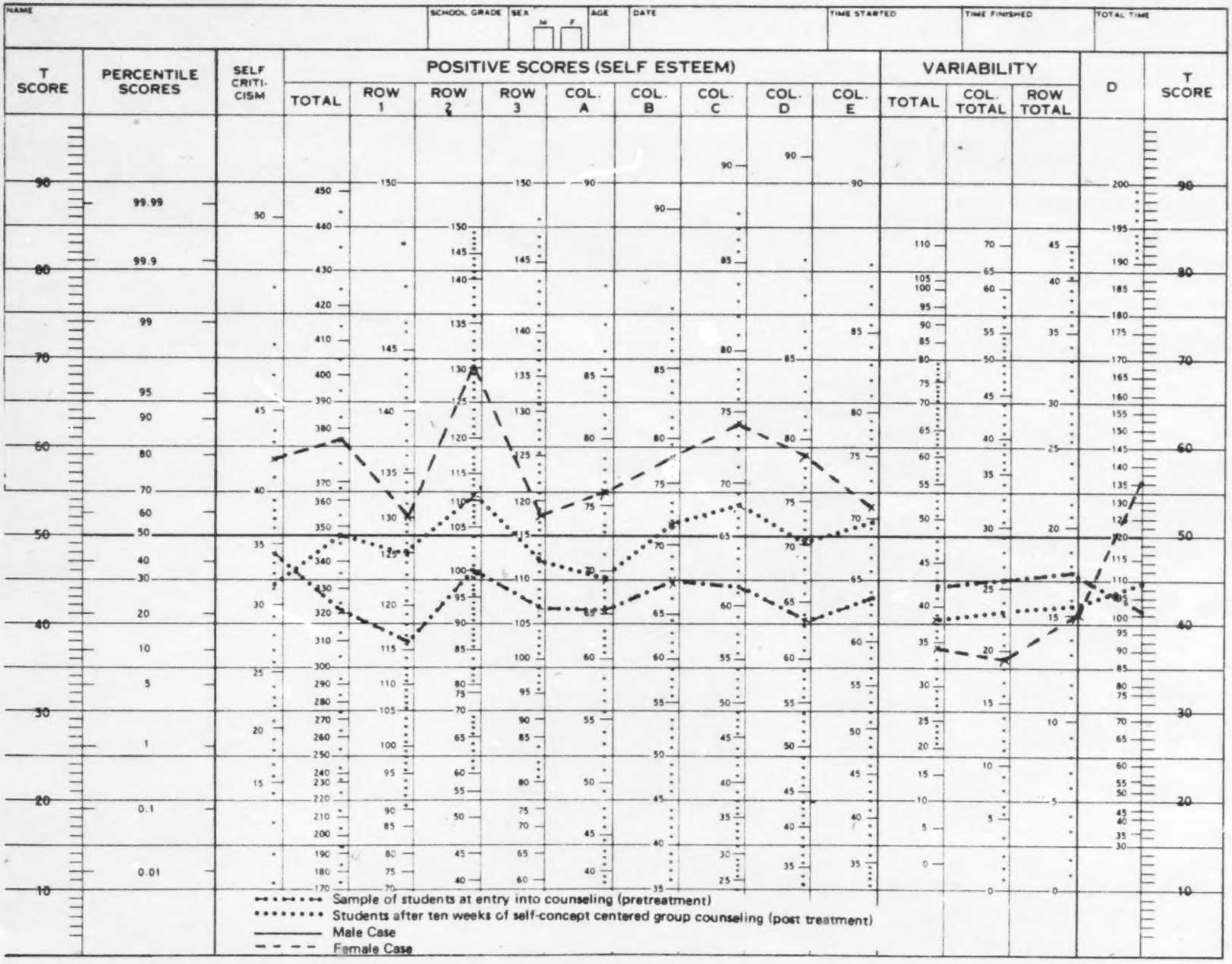
Note: Profile derived from entering student data.

Tennessee Self Concept Scale - Figure 4

PROFILE SHEET

Counseling Form

NAME	SCHOOL GRADE	SEX M F	AGE	DATE	TIME STARTED	TIME FINISHED	TOTAL TIME



Note: This is the standard profile sheet for the TSCS.

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Male					Female			
High		Low			Low		High	
Much	Some	Little	None		None	Little	Some	Much
Not Applicable. Female Single Head of Household.				Job Training				●
				Math			●	
				English				●
				Career Guidance			●	
				Work Experience				●
				Counseling	●			
				Consumer Education			●	
				Community Development			●	
				Recreation			●	
				Health				●
				Home Management		●		
				Early Childhood			●	

FIGURE 5

UTILITY RATING OF MOUNTAIN-PLAINS PROGRAM ELEMENTS

TABLE 1

SELF RATING OF PERSONAL AND WORK TRAIT CHANGES

Male		Female	
Improved	Regressed	Improved	Regressed
Not Applicable. Female Single Head of Household.		Courtesy	Attendance

TABLE 2

GENERAL QUESTIONS

1. "Rate Mountain-Plains as an influence in your life."

	Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Very Negative
Male	NA				
Female		x			

2. "Knowing what you know now, would you have chosen Mountain-Plains?"

	Definitely Yes	Probably Yes	Don't Know	Probably No	Definitely No
Male	NA				
Female	x				

3. "What is your rating for your current life in general?"

	Completely Satisfied	Well Satisfied	Neither Extreme	A Little Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Male	NA				
Female		x			

4. "Rate your success:

		Completely Successful 9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Completely Unsuccessful 0
The year before M-P."	Male	NA									
	Female									x	
Now."	Male	NA									
	Female					x					
Five years from now."	Male	NA									
	Female	x									